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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 4, 2008

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Governor Granholm's Statement from the Bench September 4, 2008

Good morning.

We are on the record. It is Thursday, September 4, 2008, at approximately 12:00 noon in The Matter of the Request for the Removal of Kwame M. Kilpatrick from the office of Mayor of the City of Detroit, Matter No. 2008-04-LO. For the record, I note the appearances of William Goodman and David Whitaker on behalf of the petitioner. And on behalf of the respondent, James Thomas and Sharon McPhail. Any additional appearances for the record?

This morning, in proceedings in Wayne County Circuit Court, Judge David Groner accepted a guilty plea from the respondent in this proceeding, Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick. The mayor pled guilty to two felony counts of obstruction of justice. He also pled no contest to one count of assaulting or obstructing a police officer.

He will serve 120 days in jail.

He will pay one million dollars in restitution to the city of Detroit, including surrendering future pension benefits.

The mayor will serve five years probation and not seek or hold elective office for five years.

He will surrender his license to practice law.

In addition, I have in my hand the letter Mayor Kilpatrick has submitted, resigning from office effective Thursday, September 18, 2008.

When the mayor's resignation takes effect, as I expect it will, in accordance with the plea agreement, the office of mayor will become vacant, and this proceeding that we are in will become moot.

In light of these events, I am suspending these proceedings. For the record, this hearing will be adjourned until Monday, September 22, 2008, at 9:00 a.m.; but if, as expected, the mayor's resignation takes effect before that date and his office becomes vacant, I will cancel the hearing, end this proceeding, and notify the parties.

(more)

The mayor's guilty plea this morning and, truly, the events of the past year will, I'm certain, serve as a profound reminder to us all – public officials and citizens – that a public office is entrusted to the person who holds that office but belongs to the people who are served by that office. Commentators and historians, I expect, will use the lessons of these difficult months to teach those young, future public servants about the importance of integrity and honor and duty to the public. When a public official violates that sacred trust, the violation and its consequences affect more than that individual. It affects us all.

Today, this sad but historic story is coming to an end.

It is very important for us as a state and as a city to turn this page together. There is much work to do. It is my profound hope that we can now write a new history for this great but embattled city and that the citizens of Detroit begin the healing process to move forward.

There has been much said over the past months about Detroit and the mayor. Understandably, a lot of anger has been expressed. On all sides.

So now, as governor, I am asking us to author a new chapter together. I would hope that Michigan citizens will demonstrate our compassion and pray for the mayor's family. I would ask us all to pray for this city, to uplift this community and its citizens, to see this as an opportunity to build a great city and region together, city and suburb, east and west, north and south.

In moments of great pain, no people are more compassionate and determined than Michigan citizens. So now is the time for us all to put feet to our prayers for Detroit.

This hearing is adjourned, and we are off the record.

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